

S. 3660, the Emergency Funding for Child Protection Act

Introduced by Senators Casey, Jones, Wyden, Harris, Kaine and Brown

While Congress has taken important initial steps to respond to COVID-19, we are only beginning to understand the broader societal implications of the pandemic. As millions of Americans are sheltering in place, victims of child abuse and neglect find themselves trapped in dangerous, even deadly, circumstances. Further, the national emergency is creating anxiety and stress that can trigger new cases of child abuse or exacerbate existing cases of violence. Sheltering at home means that children are not as frequently in contact with the counselors, teachers or doctors who might flag potential cases of abuse, heightening the need for services from government and non-profit organizations that investigate abuse or prevent it from happening in the first place. However, those organizations are facing unique challenges from the pandemic, including the risk posed by conducting home visits and the expenses involved with investing in new technology for virtual visits. It is clear that the federal government must help ensure our children are safe.

S. 3660 will provide significant, new, emergency funding to protect our children. It will provide \$500 million for child protective services through the the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) state grant program. This money will be flexible and available for a range of emergency uses, including investments in technology, personal protective equipment for caseworkers and emergency supports for children and families, such as food, cleaning supplies and diapers. The Emergency Funding for Child Protection Act will also include an extra \$1 billion for CAPTA's Community Based Child Abuse Prevention program, which will go to organizations that work on the ground to prevent child abuse. This money will also be flexible and available to expand services from those organizations, bolster state helplines and help families with their health and material needs.

As we learn more about the new coronavirus, it is increasingly clear that our Nation has a long fight ahead of it. We must take every step necessary to shore up our communities and safeguard the wellbeing of children and families. The Emergency Funding for Child Protection Act will bolster state and local efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse at a time when those efforts are a critical necessity.

Endorsements

The National Child Abuse Coalition
Zero to Three

Cosponsorship

To cosponsor the Emergency Funding for Child Protection Act, please contact Doug Hartman with Senator Bob Casey's office at Doug_Hartman@help.senate.gov.